

## **TAKE UP YOUR CROSS & FOLLOW JESUS – LUKE 9:23-36**

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. In our last study, Jesus had just revealed to the Twelve His impending death, burial, and resurrection (**Luke 9:21-22**).
2. This is not what the disciples had in mind for the Messiah.
3. If this is the fate of Jesus, what does that mean for His followers?
4. What will be the cost for following Jesus and are they willing to pay it?

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **I. THE DEMANDS OF DISCIPLESHIP**

- A. Immediately following the disciple's confession that Jesus is Christ and His own confession that He will die and be raised, Jesus calls on all the disciples to follow His example of self-sacrifice (**Luke 9:23-27**).
- B. What is Jesus calling on these disciples to do and by extension, Luke's readers?
  - i. First, He calls for self-denial – setting aside one's own interests for God's.
  - ii. Second, He calls for taking up one's cross daily and bearing it.
- C. What does Jesus have in mind here?
  - i. It is not martyrdom, for that couldn't be done "daily."
  - ii. Neither is it simply dealing with other human difficulties like poor health, difficult relationships, or other circumstances that we sometimes refer to as "crosses we have to bear."
  - iii. It is sacrificial living for God's sake in which we choose to deny self in His service (**Rom. 12:1-2; Phil. 2:3-5**).
- D. Jesus here reminds us that self-centeredness in view of the Kingdom of God is counter productive and ultimately destructive (**Luke 9:24**).
- E. Unrestrained lust for self-gratification will only lead to the loss of our own soul (**Luke 9:25**).
- F. Shame over who Jesus is and what He stands for and what He desires for us will lead to judgment and condemnation (**Luke 9:26**).
- G. Jesus served others and sacrificed Himself for others daily (**Mark 10:45**).
- H. If we seek to follow Him, we must accept that it will not be an easy, stress free road to eternal life - there can be no crown without the cross (**Jas. 1:12**).
- I. Are we truly willing to answer His call (**1 John 3:16-18; 1 Pet. 1:3-12**)?

#### **II. THE TRANSFIGURATION**

- A. Some eight days later, Jesus withdraws alone to pray on a mountain with Peter, James, and John and there something amazing takes place (**Luke 9:28**).
- B. As Jesus prayed, His appearance and clothing changed, and Moses and Elijah appear speaking to Him about what awaited Him in Jerusalem (**Luke 9:29-31**).

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- i. The “eighth” day may connect this event with the resurrection or the day the saints met to worship (**Luke 24:1; Acts 20:7**).
  - ii. Also, the appearance of “two men” connects this to the Lord’s resurrection and ascension (**Luke 24:4; Acts 1:10**).
  - iii. Jesus’ dazzling appearance recalls Moses’ change when he met God (**Exod. 34:29-30**).
  - iv. Moses and Elijah’s appearance may allude to the fact that the Law and Prophets testify to Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection (**Luke 24:25-27, 44-46**).
- C. When Peter, James, and John awake and witness the scene, Peter suggests that they celebrate and stay together as long as possible (**Luke 9:32-33**).
- D. But suddenly, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and voice came out confirming Jesus as God’s Son and a command to listen to Him (**Luke 9:34-36**).
  - i. The appearance of the cloud indicates God’s presence (**Exod. 24:15-16; Ezek. 10:4; Acts 1:9**).
  - ii. This is now the second time in Luke when God affirms Jesus as His Son (**Luke 3:22**).
- E. Luke reminds us that Peter, James, and John said nothing about what they saw and heard in those days (**cp. Matt. 17:9**).
- F. But what does this all mean for Jesus, the apostles, and Luke’s readers?
- G. For Jesus, it is confirmation that He is the Messiah and His ministry was according to God’s will.
- H. For the apostles, it is also a confirmation that Jesus is the Christ and is to be heard and obeyed.
- I. This experience had a profound effect on the apostles later on (**2 Pet. 1:16-21**).
- J. What about you and me as we read and reflect on it today?
- K. We should reflect that on that mountaintop, God did not deter or stop the Lord from going to the cross – again self-denial was the only path for the Lord.
- L. It is the only way for us to overcome sin and to show gratitude to the Father.
- M. But also, God affirmed that Jesus is the Messiah and that all should hear Him and obey Him (**Deut. 18:15; John 12:44-50; 14:6**)

### **CONCLUSION**

1. Jesus’ confession and demands on the disciples were jarring to their expectations about how God would set things right, and they should be just as jarring to us today.
2. What effect has Jesus’ demands for discipleship had on your life?
3. May God help us to recognize who Jesus is and to be willing to take up our cross daily and follow Him (**Luke 9:23**).